

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A system for soliciting, receiving and managing appraisals for a business engaged in providing financing to a customer, wherein the financing is secured by an asset, each appraisal is submitted to the business by one of a plurality of appraisers ~~an appraiser~~ and values the asset securing the loan, said system comprising:

a first database for storing data including a plurality of appraisals ~~submitted by a plurality of appraisers~~, wherein each appraisal describes and values a different asset used for securing a financing, wherein access to said first database is restricted to users associated with the business;

a second database for storing appraisal bid request data including information describing at least one asset to be appraised, wherein access to said second database is restricted to registered users;

a client system associated with ~~the appraiser~~ each of the plurality of appraisers;

a business server coupled to said first and second databases and said client system, said server programmed to:

retrieve data from said second database and display on the client system an appraisal bid request including information describing a specific asset to be used for securing a financing;

receive a response from each of the plurality of appraisers ~~the appraiser~~ to the appraisal bid request displayed on the client system;

prompt a user associated with the business to select one of the plurality of appraisers to provide an appraisal;

prompt the selected appraiser, by displaying [a] an appraisal template comprising a plurality of data fields on the client system, to input an appraisal including a type and a value of the asset being appraised;

~~store the inputted appraisal; receive the appraisal template and store the received appraisal template~~ within said first database based on the type of asset being appraised and the selected appraiser submitting the appraisal; and

transmit the data received through the appraisal template to a plurality of users associated with the business;

determine whether the submitted appraisal template contains data in each of the plurality of data fields, when at least one of the plurality of data fields does not contain data the selected appraiser is notified that the appraisal template is incomplete and is requested to resubmit the appraisal template containing data in each of the plurality of data fields; and

process the plurality of appraisals stored within said first database including valuing an asset to be appraised by comparing the type of asset to be appraised with the types of assets stored within said first database.

2. (previously amended) A system according to Claim 1 wherein said business server is further configured to:

receive a sold amount for each asset stored within said first database after the asset is sold;

store each sold amount for each asset sold within said first database;

compare the sold amount for each asset sold to the value of the asset included within the appraisal stored within said first database; and

determine an accuracy of an appraiser based on the comparison of the sold amount of an asset to the appraised value of the asset.

3. (original) A system according to Claim 1 wherein said pages comprise ASP pages and HTML pages, and wherein XSL files are stored in said web server.

4. (previously amended) A system according to Claim 1 further comprising at least one client system comprising a browser, said browser configured to communicate with said business server.

5. (cancelled)

6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) A system for soliciting, receiving and managing appraisals for a business engaged in providing financing to a customer, wherein the financing is secured by an asset, each appraisal is submitted to the business by ~~an appraiser~~ one of a plurality of appraisers and values the asset securing the loan, said system comprising:

a database comprising data corresponding to a plurality of appraisals ~~submitted by a plurality of appraisers~~ wherein each appraisal describes and values a different asset used for securing a financing, and appraisal bid request data including information describing at least one asset to be appraised;

a client system associated with ~~the appraiser~~ and each of the plurality of appraisers;

a business server coupled to said database and said client system, said server programmed to:

retrieve data from said database and display on the client system an appraisal bid request including information describing a specific asset to be used for securing a financing;

receive a response from ~~the appraiser~~ each of the plurality of appraisers to the appraisal bid request displayed on the client system;

prompt a user associated with the business to select one of the plurality of appraisers to provide an appraisal;

prompt the selected appraiser, by displaying [a] an appraisal template comprising a plurality of data fields on the client system, to input an appraisal including a type and a value of the asset being appraised;

~~store the inputted appraisal~~ receive the appraisal template and store the received appraisal template within said first database based on the type of asset being appraised and the selected appraiser submitting the appraisal;

transmit the data received through the appraisal template to a plurality of users associated with the business;

determine whether the submitted appraisal template contains data in each of the plurality of data fields, when at least one of the plurality of data fields does not contain data the selected appraiser is notified that the appraisal template is incomplete and is requested to resubmit the appraisal template containing data in each of the plurality of data fields;

receive a sold amount for each asset stored within said database after the asset is sold;

compare the sold amount for each asset sold to the value of the asset included within the appraisal stored within said database; and

determine an accuracy of an appraiser based on the comparison of the sold amount of an asset to the appraised value of the asset.

8. (previously amended) A system according to Claim 7 wherein said business server is further programmed to receive data corresponding to prospective users and provide the prospective user data to the database.

9. (previously amended) A system according to Claim 7 further comprising a web server coupled to said business server, said web server comprising a memory having a plurality of HTML pages stored therein.

10. (original) A system according to Claim 7 further comprising a user terminal comprising a browser, said browser configured to communicate with said web server.

11. (currently amended) A method for obtaining an appraisal for soliciting, receiving and managing appraisals for a business engaged in providing financing to a customer, wherein the financing is secured by an asset, each appraisal is submitted to the business by ~~an appraiser~~ one of a plurality of appraisers and values the asset securing the loan, said method comprising the steps of:

displaying on a client system an appraisal bid request including information describing a specific asset to be used for securing a financing;

receiving[e] a response from ~~the appraiser~~ each of the plurality of appraisers to the appraisal bid request displayed on the client system;

prompting a user associated with the business to select one of the plurality of appraisers to provide an appraisal;

prompting the selected appraiser, by displaying[a] an appraisal template comprising a plurality of data fields on the client system, to input an appraisal including a type and a value of the asset being appraised;

~~storing the inputted appraisal~~ receiving the appraisal template and storing the received appraisal template within a database based on the type of asset being appraised and the selected appraiser submitting the appraisal, wherein the database stores data including a plurality of appraisals ~~submitted by a plurality of appraisers~~, wherein each appraisal describes and values a different asset used for securing a financing; ~~and~~

transmitting the data received through the appraisal template to a plurality of users associated with the business;

determining whether the submitted appraisal template contains data in each of the plurality of data fields, when at least one of the plurality of data fields does not contain data the selected appraiser is notified that the appraisal template is incomplete and is requested to resubmit the appraisal template containing data in each of the plurality of data fields; and

processing the plurality of appraisals stored within the database including valuing an asset to be appraised by comparing the type of asset to be appraised with the types of assets stored within said first database.

12. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 11 wherein displaying on a client system an appraisal bid request comprises the steps of contacting a plurality of appraisers and requesting each appraiser to submit a bid to perform an appraisal.

13. (original) A method according to Claim 12 further comprising the step of receiving a plurality of bids and selecting an appraiser based at least in part on the bid submitted by that appraiser.

14. (original) A method according to Claim 13 further comprising the step of notifying the selected appraiser that the bid has been accepted and that the appraiser is to perform the appraisal.

15. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 11 wherein processing the plurality of appraisals further comprises:

receiving a sold amount for each asset stored within the database after the asset is sold;

storing each sold amount for each asset sold within the database;

comparing the sold amount for each asset sold to the value of the asset included within the appraisal stored within the database; and

determining an accuracy of an appraiser based on the comparison of the sold amount of an asset to the appraised value of the asset.

16. (currently amended) A method for operating a computer for soliciting, receiving and managing appraisals for a business engaged in providing financing to a customer, wherein the financing is secured by an asset, each appraisal is submitted to the business by an appraiser one of a plurality of appraisers and values the asset securing the loan, said method comprising:

displaying on the computer an appraisal bid request including information describing a specific asset to be used for securing a financing;

receiving a response from ~~the appraiser~~ each one of the plurality of appraisers to the appraisal bid request displayed on the computer;

prompting a user associated with the business to select one of the plurality of appraisers to provide an appraisal;

prompting the selected appraiser, by displaying[a] an appraisal template comprising a plurality of data fields on the computer, to input an appraisal including a type and a value of the asset being appraised;

~~storing the inputted appraisal~~ receiving the appraisal template and storing the received appraisal template within a database based on the type of asset being appraised and the selected appraiser submitting the appraisal, wherein the database stores data including a plurality of appraisals ~~submitted by a plurality of appraisers~~, wherein each appraisal describes and values a different asset used for securing a financing;

transmitting the data received through the appraisal template to a plurality of users associated with the business;

determining whether the submitted appraisal template contains data in each of the plurality of data fields, when at least one of the plurality of data fields does not contain data the selected appraiser is notified that the appraisal template is incomplete and is requested to resubmit the appraisal template containing data in each of the plurality of data fields;

receiving a sold amount for each asset stored within the database after the asset is sold;

comparing the sold amount for each asset sold to the value of the asset included within the appraisal stored within the database; and

determining an accuracy of an appraiser based on the comparison of the sold amount of an asset to the appraised value of the asset.

17. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 16 wherein to display [an] the appraisal template, the computer causes a web page to be displayed at an appraiser device, the web page comprising a plurality of data fields to be populated by the appraiser in order to complete the appraisal.

18. (original) A method according to Claim 17 wherein the user device comprises a wireless device.

19. (original) A method according to Claim 16 further comprising operating the computer to search the database to retrieve a stored appraisal.

20. (original) A method according to Claim 16 further comprising operating the computer to search the database to retrieve data corresponding to a requested report.

21. (original) A method according to Claim 16 wherein the received data comprises an image of the appraised asset.

22.-25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) Apparatus for soliciting, receiving and managing appraisals for a business engaged in providing financing to a customer, wherein the financing is secured by an asset, each appraisal is submitted to the business by ~~an appraiser~~ one of a plurality of appraisers and values the asset securing the loan, said apparatus comprising:

means for storing data within a database including a plurality of appraisals ~~submitted by a plurality of appraisers~~, wherein each appraisal describes and values a different asset used for securing a financing, wherein access to said first database is restricted to users associated with the business;

means for retrieving data from the database and displaying on a client system an appraisal bid request including information describing a specific asset to be used for securing a financing;

means for receiving a response from each of the plurality of appraisers ~~the appraiser~~ to the appraisal bid request displayed on the client system;

means for prompting a user associated with the business to select one of the plurality of appraisers to provide an appraisal;

means for prompting the selected appraiser, by displaying [a] an appraisal template comprising a plurality of data fields on the client system, to input an appraisal including a type and a value of the asset being appraised;

means for ~~storing the inputted appraisal~~ receiving the appraisal template and storing the received appraisal template within the database based on the type of asset being appraised and the selected appraiser submitting the appraisal; and

means for transmitting the data received through the appraisal template to a plurality of users associated with the business;

means for determining whether the submitted appraisal template contains data in each of the plurality of data fields, when at least one of the plurality of data fields does not contain data the selected appraiser is notified that the appraisal template is incomplete and is requested to resubmit the appraisal template containing data in each of the plurality of data fields;

means for processing the plurality of appraisals stored within the database including valuing an asset to be appraised by comparing the type of asset to be appraised with the types of assets stored within said first database.

27. (previously amended) Apparatus according to Claim 26 wherein said means for retrieving data comprises a web server coupled to a user terminal comprising a browser.

28. (previously amended) Apparatus according to Claim 26 wherein said means for prompting the appraiser comprises a web server coupled to a system server.

29. (previously amended) Apparatus according to Claim 26 wherein said apparatus further comprises:

means for receiving a sold amount for each asset stored within the database after the asset is sold;

means for storing each sold amount for each asset sold within the database;

means for comparing the sold amount for each asset sold to the value of the asset included within the appraisal stored within the database; and

means for determining an accuracy of an appraiser based on the comparison of the sold amount of an asset to the appraised value of the asset.

30. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium for soliciting, receiving and managing appraisals for a business engaged in providing financing to a customer, wherein the financing is secured by an asset, each appraisal is submitted to the business by ~~an appraiser~~ one of a plurality of appraisers and values the asset securing the loan, said computer-readable medium executable by a computer for controlling the computer to:

store data within a database including a plurality of appraisals ~~submitted by a plurality of appraisers~~, wherein each appraisal describes and values a different asset used for securing a financing, wherein access to said first database is restricted to users associated with the business;

retrieve data from the database and display on a client system an appraisal bid request including information describing a specific asset to be used for securing a financing;

receive a response from each of the plurality of appraisers ~~the appraiser~~ to the appraisal bid request displayed on the client system;

prompt a user associated with the business to select one of the plurality of appraisers to provide an appraisal;

prompt the selected appraiser, by displaying [a] an appraisal template comprising a plurality of data fields on the client system, to input an appraisal including a type and a value of the asset being appraised;

~~store the inputted appraisal~~ receive the appraisal template and store the received appraisal template within the database based on the type of asset being appraised and the selected appraiser submitting the appraisal; and

transmit the data received through the appraisal template to a plurality of users associated with the business;

determine whether the submitted appraisal template contains data in each of the plurality of data fields, when at least one of the plurality of data fields does not contain data the selected appraiser is notified that the appraisal template is incomplete and is requested to resubmit the appraisal template containing data in each of the plurality of data fields; and

process the plurality of appraisals stored within the database including valuing an asset to be appraised by comparing the type of asset to be appraised with the types of assets stored within said first database.

31. (original) A computer readable medium according to Claim 30 wherein said processing further comprises the steps of retrieve and update data in an appraisal application database, and retrieve and update data in a registered user database.

32. (previously amended) A computer readable medium according to Claim 30 wherein pages displayed on the client system comprise ASP pages and HTML pages.

33.-48. (cancelled)

49. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the appraisal template includes statements of limiting conditions identifying conditions that apply to the appraisal.

50. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 49 wherein the statements of limiting conditions include tasks the appraiser performed and did not perform in completing the appraisal.

51. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 7 wherein the appraisal template includes statements of limiting conditions identifying conditions that apply to the appraisal.

52. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 51 wherein the statements of limiting conditions include tasks the appraiser performed and did not perform in completing the appraisal.

53. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 11 further comprising including statements of limiting conditions in the appraisal template identifying conditions that apply to the appraisal.

54. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 53 wherein the statements of limiting conditions include tasks the appraiser performed and did not perform in completing the appraisal.

55. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 16 further comprising including statements of limiting conditions in the appraisal template identifying conditions that apply to the appraisal.

56. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 55 wherein the statements of limiting conditions include tasks the appraiser performed and did not perform in completing the appraisal.

57. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 26 wherein the appraisal template includes statements of limiting conditions identifying conditions that apply to the appraisal.

58. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 57 wherein the statements of limiting conditions include tasks the appraiser performed and did not perform in completing the appraisal.

59. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 30 wherein the appraisal template includes statements of limiting conditions identifying conditions that apply to the appraisal.

60. (new) A system in accordance with Claim 59 wherein the statements of limiting conditions include tasks the appraiser performed and did not perform in completing the appraisal.